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Title: Studies in Comics: Alan Moore Themed Issue 2:1

Creators: Wiseman-Trowse, N. J. B., Starr, M., Murray, C. and Round, J.

Example citation: Wiseman-Trowse, N. J. B., Starr, M., Murray, C. and Round, J. (2011) Editor. Studies in Comics: Alan Moore Themed Issue. **2**(1) London: Intellect. 2040-3232.

Official URL: <http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-issue,id=2007/>

Note: Magus conference brochure

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/3798/>





MAGUS

TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE WORK OF



ALAN MOORE

AVENUE CAMPUS THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON UNITED KINGDOM
28 & 29 MAY 2010

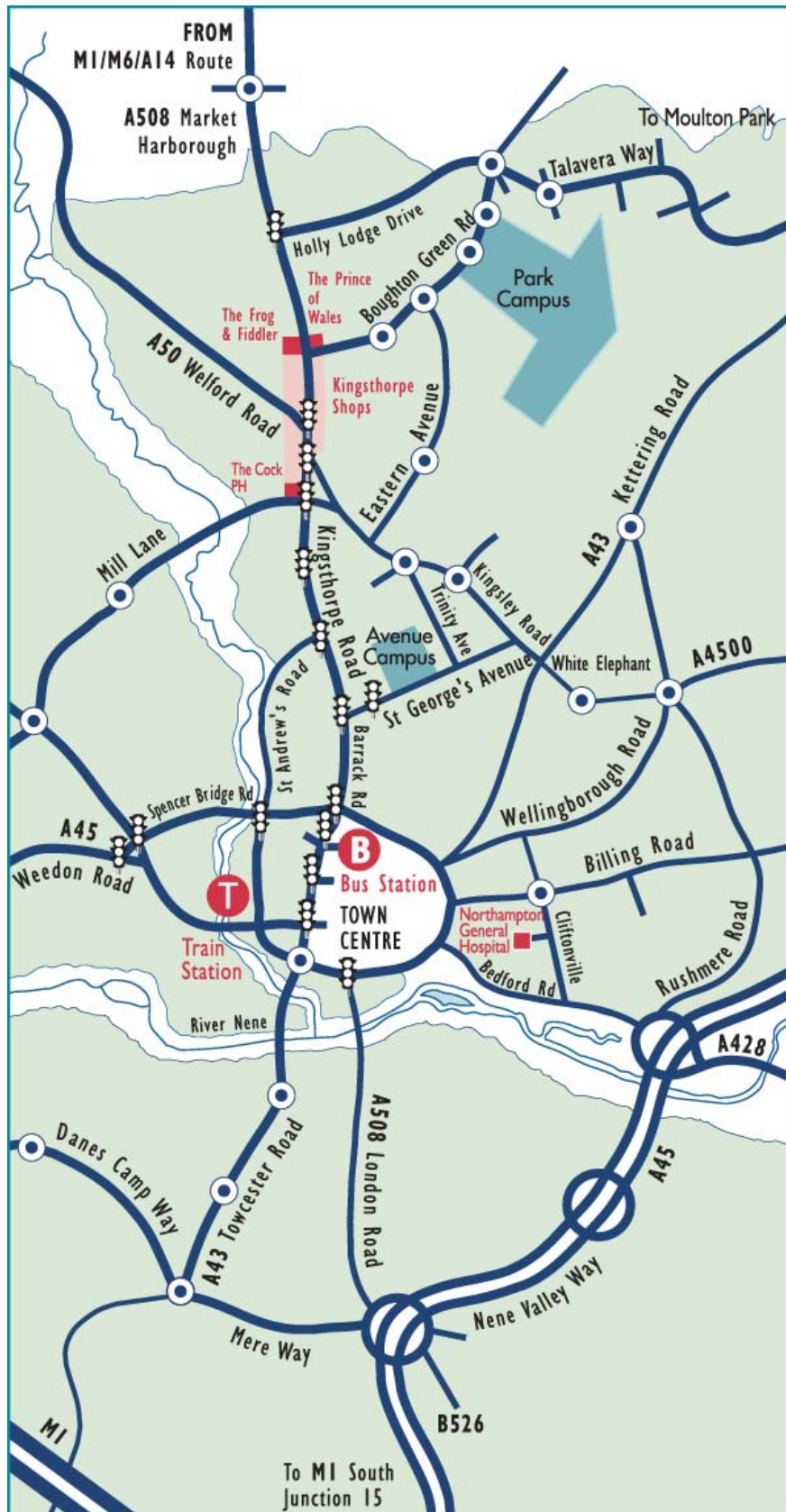
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Northampton



Magus: Transdisciplinary Approaches to the Work of Alan Moore

Conference Schedule

Friday 28th May

9am – 10.30am:

Avenue Campus Maidwell Reception

Registration

10.30am – 11.30am:

Avenue Campus Maidwell Cinema

Welcome and Introduction: Nathan Wiseman-Trowse and Mike Starr

(The University of Northampton, UK)

Keynote Paper: Paul Gravett (Author, UK)

Something from Nothing - Small Killing, Big Numbers: Comics Beyond

Referentiality and Reinvention

11.30am – 12.00am:

Avenue Campus Maidwell Cinema

Refreshments

12.00am – 1.30pm:

MR5

Panel 1 – Assault on the Canon

Chair - Nathan Wiseman-Trowse

David Simmons (The University of Northampton, UK)

"Nothing too Heavy or too Light" Negotiating Moore's *Tom Strong* and the Academic Establishment

Andrés Romero-Jódar (The University of Zaragoza, Spain)

Alan Moore's Graphic Novels: A Hammer to Shape Reality

Maggie Gray (University College London, UK)

Alan Moore's Underground: The Formation of a Dissident Cultural Practice

MY120

Panel 2 – No More Heroes Anymore?

Chair – Mike Starr

Marco Pellitteri (The University of Trento, Italy)

From Daddy Warbucks to the Watchmen: General Annotations on Alan Moore, Superheroes, and Ideology in Popular Comics

Vasileios Sakkos (The London Consortium, UK)

Dissecting Comic Book Skin: Cuts in Alan Moore's *The Birth Caul* and *From Hell*

Deneb Kozikoski Valereto (Leiden University, The Netherlands)

Philosophy in the Fairground: *The Killing Joke* and Thoughts on Madness

1.30pm – 2.30pm:

Avenue Campus Maidwell Cinema

Buffet Lunch

Screening of *Don't Let Me Die In Black And White* (1993)

2.30pm – 4.00pm:

MY120

Panel 3 - Chaotic Criminality: The Villains of Alan Moore

Chair – Nathan Wiseman-Trowse

Geoff Klock (Borough of Manhattan Community College, USA)

V for Villain

Mervi Miettinen (The University of Tampere, Finland)

Past as Multiple Choice? – Textual Anarchy in *The Killing Joke*

Laura Hilton (The University of Birmingham, UK)

Reincarnating Mina Murray: Subverting the Gothic Heroine?

4.00pm – 4.30pm:

Avenue Campus Maidwell Cinema

Refreshments

4.30pm – 6.00pm

MR5

Panel 4 – The Magick of Place

Chair – Stephen Keane

Rikke Cortsen (The University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

Building Fictional Worlds: On the Construction of Place in Alan Moore's *Top 10*

K A Laity (The College of Saint Rose, USA)

Rite Here: Ritual, Performance and the Magick of Place

Antonio Venezia (Birkbeck College, UK)

"A Sense of History's Patterns...": Mapping Northampton in *Voice of the Fire* and *Big Numbers*

7.30pm

Dinner at the Jade Pavilion Restaurant

Saturday 29th May

9am – 10.00am:

Avenue Campus Maidwell Reception

Registration

10.00am – 11.30am

MR5

Panel 5 - Schizo Alliances

Chair - Andrés Romero-Jódar

Gary Lloyd (Musician and Producer, UK)

Moore and Music

Cyril Camus (The University of Toulouse, France)

Neil Gaiman: A Portrait of the Artist as a Disciple of Alan Moore

Jasmine Shadrack (The University of Northampton, UK)

V Versus Hollywood: A Discourse on Polemic Thievery

MY120

Panel 6 – Chronotopia

Chair – Nathan Wiseman-Trowse

Michel De Dobbeleer (Ghent University, Belgium)

Googling Watchmen's 'Vice-President Ford' and the 'Keene Act': How to Extend Narratological Levels when Dealing with Alternate History?

Jochen Ecke (Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany)

"Solve and Coagula": Alan Moore and the Classical Comic Book's Spatial and Temporal Systems

Charlie Blake (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Pirate Multiplicities and Deleuzo-Guattarean Shadows: Aion, Chronos and Magical Inscription in the Graphic Novels of Alan Moore

11.30am – 12.00am

Avenue Campus Maidwell Cinema

Refreshments

12.00am – 1.30pm

MR5

Panel 7 – The Gutter and the Stars

Chair – David Simmons

Chris Murray (The University of Dundee, UK)

The Eroticism of Place: Alan Moore and Psychogeography

Marc Singer (Howard University, USA)

Dark Genesis: Falls from Language and Returns to Eden in the Comics of Alan Moore

Peter Paik (The University of Wisconsin, USA)

Radicalism and Realpolitik: Political Realism in the Comics of Alan Moore

MY120

Panel 8 – Leaping Mediums

Chair – Mike Starr

Stephen Keane (The University of Northampton, UK)

Watching The Watchmen: From Panels to Frames in *Watchmen* (1986-2009)

Aine Young (Queen's University Belfast, UK)

From Hell: The Adverse Journey from Page to Screen

Ian Dawe (Selkirk College, Canada)

The Moore Film Adaptations and the Erotic-Grotesque

1.30pm – 2.30pm

Avenue Campus Maidwell Cinema

Buffet Lunch

Screening of *Northampton Tales* (2000)

2.30pm – 4.00pm

Avenue Maidwell Cinema

Alan Moore and Melinda Gebbie

4.00pm – 4.30pm

Avenue Maidwell Cinema

Concluding Thoughts

Abstracts and Biographies

Charlie Blake

Pirate Multiplicities and Deleuzo-Guattarean Shadows: Aion, Chronos and Magical Inscription in the Graphic Novels of Alan Moore

There is a sense in which the graphic novel can be considered as one of the most innovative artistic forms to have emerged in the past thirty years. Its combination of visual and textual elements, spread out spatially and temporally according to a range of narrative and ontological imperatives, raises vital questions of sense and expression, and the relation between sense and expression and the concepts of space, time and the event, in a manner arguably more philosophically rich than in any other contemporary medium. In particular, it sets out zones of ontological consistency and interference that question the distinction between the fictional and the real in a manner quite different to mediums such as film or literature or painting, while drawing on these prior media in a range of ways for its force of sense and expression.

This paper will seek to address questions of creativity, sense and expression in the fiction of Alan Moore and the artists with whom he has worked through an examination of their manipulation of time and space and magical inscription. It will do this across and alongside the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and the often antipathetic thought of Alain Badiou, on the event and multiplicity. Taking as its points of "triangulation", therefore, firstly, Moore's Watchman and Promethea series, secondly, Deleuze's notion of the artistic event as a form of "doubling" in The Logic of Sense and his writings alone and with Guattari on multiplicity, virtuality and the event, and thirdly, Badiou's notion of "pirate multiplicities" from his essay on Pessoa in The Century, and contrasting version of multiplicity and event in various works, this paper will consider the hieroglyphic density of magical inscription in Moore as a fabricated codex of fundamental creativity in art, literature and philosophy. It will be considered here as a fabricated codex, moreover, whose ontological implications emerge both mimetically and diegetically from its enactment as a narrative device so as to question the very notion of a distinction of ontological levels between "fiction" and "reality". In this automimetic sense, it will be argued, the work of Moore can be said to exemplify Deleuze's claim in The Logic of Sense that:

"To be the mime of what effectively occurs, to double the actualisation with a counter-actualisation, the identification with a distance, like the true actor and the dancer, is to give the truth of the event the only chance of not being confused with its inevitable actualisation...."

- and yet, to challenge that notion of the event in the manner that Badiou has done in his debates with Deleuze in his various writings on art, event and multiplicity. It will then, be against this agon and its implications for the ontology

of graphic fiction that the work of Moore and his visualisations, and their use of magical inscription will be considered.

Biography:

Charlie Blake is at present head of the Department of Media, Film & Communications at Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom. He has published on Bataille, Deleuze & Guattari, nihilism, gnosticism, popular music and negative theology, and has recently co-edited a two volume study for the journal *Angelaki* entitled *Shadows of Cruelty: Sadism, Masochism & the Philosophical Muse* with Frida Beckman of Uppsala University, Sweden. He is working on a collection, *Beyond Human: From Animality to Transhumanism*, with Steven Shakespeare, Liverpool Hope University & Claire Molloy, Liverpool John Moore's University, an investigation into music, technology and hauntology, *Sonic Spectralities: Music, Machines, Hauntography*, with Isabella van Elferen, University of Utrecht, Netherlands, a study of sex and the moving image, *Sexing the Event: Performing the Real in Post-Transgressive Cinema*, with Beth Johnson, Keele University, and a collection on *Immanence & Materialism* with Patrice Haynes of Liverpool Hope University.

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Cyril Camus

Neil Gaiman: A Portrait of the Artist as a Disciple of Alan Moore

Gaiman often stresses, in interviews, that Moore actually *taught* him comics-script writing. Some features of Gaiman's work seem partly inherited from Moore. Gaiman's *Sandman* displays a more or less Philip Jose Farmer-like integrative diegesis, where characters from numerous fictions meet and interact in a boundless celebration of imagination. That mirrors Moore's advocating such a narrative conceit in his 1987 preface for the first *Swamp Thing* collection, and his implementing it, since 1999, in his ongoing series *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. In *Marvelman/Miracleman* (a series for which Moore's successor was actually Gaiman), Moore makes the hazy intertextual ties and structural similarities between superhero mythology and religious mythologies fairly explicit. That can easily be seen as a template for Gaiman's own fantasy writing rooted in the explicit and literal use of mythology, in such works as *Sandman* or *American Gods*.

Their aesthetic approaches are so parallel that some of Gaiman's works define themselves mostly by their intertextual relationship to Moore's. For instance, Gaiman's main achievement, in *Black Orchid*, is the way he exploited the "DC Universe" intertextuality to continue, and expand on, the sylvan mythology roughed out by Moore in *Swamp Thing*. And Gaiman's more recent *Batman: Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?* is not linked to Moore's 1986 *Superman: Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?* only because of their "twin" titles. It also deals with the issue of the "dissolution of time" (typical of

periodical heroic fiction and analyzed by Umberto Eco in his 1972 paper "The Myth of Superman") in a way exactly opposite to that favoured by Moore, thus emphasizing the contrary symbolic values of Batman and Superman. The paper project I am submitting to you aims to explore Moore's influence on Gaiman's writings.

Biography:

I am a Ph.D student and teaching assistant at the English department of the University of Toulouse. My thesis deals with the role of myth in popular art, through the study of Neil Gaiman's works as a comics-writer, novelist and screenwriter. Two of my papers are to be published in 2010: one on the use of landscape, especially mountains, in Gaiman's writings (in *Mountains Figured and Disfigured in the English-Speaking World*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing), and the other on the sylvan motif in Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing* and Neil Gaiman's *Black Orchid* (in *Otrante*, a French academic journal dedicated to fantasy).

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Rikke Cortsen

Building fictional worlds: on the construction of place in Alan Moore's Top 10

This paper examines how the fictional world of Neopolis and its co-worlds are constructed in the ABC series Top 10 written by Alan Moore and drawn by Gene Ha. The analysis is focused on how the sense of place and the credibility of the worlds are established as a combination of re-invention, inter-textual references and counterfactual history writing. Using Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope to open up the narrative, the analysis is interested in the interdependency between time and space and how reality and fiction are intertwined in Top 10.

When discussing Alan Moore's Promethea, Annalisa Di Liddo uses the term "chronotope of the imagination" to describe how imaginary time-space is structured. In this presentation I will explain how in Top 10 this "chronotope of the imagination" is grounded within a frame of "the chronotope of reality" and as a result creates a place of fiction that can exist as possible worlds with plausible cause and almost unlimited freedom of content.

In Top 10 the "chronotope of imagination" is anchored in the reader's real world experience through a number of references both inter-textual and historical that open up the space for both the humour and identification the reader is treated to through the familiarity of the well known and the surprise of the new.

Biography:

Rikke Platz Cortsen is a PhD student at the University of Copenhagen's Department of Arts and Cultural Studies with a project on time and space in

comics. Her MA thesis was titled *Simultaneity, Moment, Eternity – on the Construction of Time and Space in Comics by Alan Moore*. She has presented papers about comics at various conferences including a paper on comics written by Alan Moore and their use of an Apocalyptic Moment.

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Ian Dawe

The Moore Film Adaptations and the Erotic-Grotesque

The grotesque has long been a staple of the comic book vernacular, but Alan Moore's graphic literature often transcends this and explores the relationship between the erotic and the grotesque. In this way, Moore evokes the subversive spirit of the carnival, foregrounding bodily transformation, deformation and the connection between interior bodily functions and the external world. Bakhtin describes this "festival of the body" as essential to an understanding of the literary and artistic carnivalesque, which Robert Stam extended to film and pornography in his seminal work *Subversive Pleasures*.

Moore's literary take on the erotic-grotesque is thoroughly in line with this rich artistic tradition, which adds resonance to some of Moore's central meta-themes: invisible connections between class, gender, social groups and moral opposites. His artistic collaborators have expressed this effectively throughout Moore's literary oeuvre, from *Swamp Thing* to *The Lost Girls*.

Unfortunately, the film adaptations of his work tend to de-emphasize this critical aspect of Moore. In this paper, I assert that the artistic success or failure of the Moore film adaptations rest to a large extent on the degree to which they grapple with the erotic-grotesque. *From Hell* (Hughes Brothers, 2002), which I argue is the most successful cinematic adaptation of Moore's literature retains the essence of Moore's erotic/grotesque sensibilities even while altering much of the principal narrative and themes. By contrast, the film adaptation of *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (Norrington, 2003) alters the original to a similar extent, but also removes much of the novel's sense of the erotic-grotesque. This omission, I argue, is the key element that leads to the film's artistic failure.

The definitive film adaptation of Moore's work is therefore yet to be seen, but one would hope that a filmmaker with an understanding of the relationship between the erotic and the grotesque and a willingness to deploy it (Terry Gilliam and Guillermo del Toro are examples) will someday get the opportunity to provide us with it.

Biography:

Ian Dawe received an MA in Film Studies from the University of Exeter in 2007, with a dissertation on director Terry Gilliam including an exploration of the grotesque in film. He currently teaches Film Studies and World Cinema at Selkirk

College in Nelson, BC, Canada, where he has also lectured on the literary tradition of *Watchmen*. A longtime comic book and film enthusiast, he also has a background in the sciences and teaches Biology and Biological Anthropology.

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Michel De Dobbeleer

Googling Watchmen's 'Vice-President Ford' and the 'Keene Act': How to extend narratological levels when dealing with alternate history?

Grown up entirely within the Franco-Belgian comics tradition, I confess that I have read *Watchmen* only for the first time in 2009. On page 2, I realized that I would need to look up several historical facts and names in order to make sense – more than twenty years after the publication – of the complex background of morbid Cold War tensions against which the action takes place. (Vainly) desiring to get the full picture, I googled 'vice-president Ford' (I knew a US president had that name) and learned that Gerald Ford had been vice-president, albeit not in 1985, the year on page 1. On page 4, I googled 'KT-28', and 'Keene Act', which made me realize that *Watchmen* has – to my astonishment – its own 'Wiki', and more important, that it displays an alternate history.

Different scholars (e.g. Kukkonen, Miettinen) have fruitfully studied Moore's playing with the narratological levels of story and discourse. While they have focused on the manipulations at the discourse-level, I divide the story in separate levels to probe the mechanisms of reading 'uchronical' comic stories: (a) the story, i.e. the Russian formalists' fabula or Stierle's *Geschichte*, and (b) the real historical facts, necessary to reconstruct the background (cf. Stierle's *Geschehen*). In comics with a common historical setting the words and images of level (a) normally fit with the implicit data of (b). This not being the case in alternate-history comics, we might postulate a third ('uchronical') story-level (c). This contains the events that must have happened in the fictional, but not in the real world, which anyhow functions as the implicit background that urges reflection during the reading process.

Throughout, *Watchmen* will be compared with 'Dylan Dog', n° 240, *Ucronia*, a 2006 Italian alternate-history comic by Sclavi and Saudelli in which Stalin and Hitler established 'il comunazismo'.

Biography:

Michel De Dobbeleer is a Slavist, Italianist and classicist. He is finishing his Ph D dissertation at Ghent University (Belgium) on narratology in premodern historiographical and epic texts (esp. Nestor Iskander's medieval Russian Tale of the Taking of Constantinople). His publications predominantly deal with narratology, plot, chronotopes... in 'siege narratives' (also: sieges in comics). He was one of the organizers of this year's ACLA-panel in Harvard, 'Comics at War:

From Troy to Sarajevo'. Articles on the 'chronotope of the war council', and on chronotopic and narratological levels in comics are forthcoming.

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Jochen Ecke

"Solve and coagula": Alan Moore and the Classical Comic Book's Spatial and Temporal Systems

"Rather than seizing upon the superficial similarities between comics and films or comics and books," Alan Moore proposes in *Writing for Comics*, "wouldn't it be more constructive to focus our attention upon those ideas where comics are special and unique?" It is possible to interpret Moore's career as following up on this proposition first made in the 1980s. But Moore's approach to the comics medium does not take the non-narrative form of avantgarde art; rather, it can be described as an intense negotiation with "classical" comic book narration – in particular, classical comics' representation of space and time.

In my paper, I will therefore first of all provide a brief overview of how classical comic books construct their spatio-temporal systems. I will draw ideas from art history (Lessing's study of narrativity in the visual arts, Gombrich's account of the "abbreviated" style of cartoons) as well as from film studies (Bordwell's formalist approach to temporal order in narrative). My aim will be to define some central aspects of a classical mode of spatio-temporal representation in comics, which, as Eisner puts it, seems to be predicated on the reader's "voluntary cooperation" in establishing unambiguously chronological narration.

In the following, I will analyse how Moore makes use of the very same devices to subvert temporal order and to foreground the medium's innate spatiality (a process Moore himself has likened to the alchemical process of "solve and coagula"). My inquiry will be based on two works which also reflect upon questions of time and space thematically: *A Small Killing* (1991) and *From Hell* (1989-1996). In these works, Moore's stylistic operations demonstrate the narrative potential of the medium - most prominently, the possibility to represent simultaneity, which Moore puts to powerful use in developing themes of memory and identity. In sum, my aim is to portray Moore not just as one of the medium's most gifted writers, but also as one of its most important covert theorists.

Biography:

Jochen Ecke teaches English literature at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. He has written his master's thesis on concepts of time and space in Alan Moore's later works and is currently preparing his doctoral thesis on post-classical British comic books. In addition to co-editing *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures* (forthcoming from McFarland), he has done extensive work in

the German comics industry, serving as German editor and occasional translator on works by Ed Brubaker, Greg Rucka and Alan Moore.

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Paul Gravett

Biography:

Nicknamed by Eddie Campbell "The Man at the Crossroads", Paul Gravett is an author, lecturer, broadcaster and curator specialising in international comic art. From 1983-89 he co-edited with Peter Stanbury the British comics magazine *Escape* and since 2003 has directed the Comic Festival in London. In 2004 he curated "Alan Moore: Les Dessins du Magicien", the most complete survey to date of Moore and his collaborators in the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroi, Belgium. This year he is curating exhibitions on Tove Jansson and the Moomins, Jack Kirby, Hypercomics, and 21st Century Graphic Narratives.

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Maggie Gray

Alan Moore's underground: the formation of a dissident cultural practice

This paper will address Alan Moore's earliest work for zines and underground papers from 1971 to 1980, and the significance of the hippie counterculture as a formative influence on his politics and approach to cultural production. It will consider his output in illustration, poetry and prose, but focus particularly on his earliest comics, featured in *Embryo*, *anon. the alternative newspaper of Northampton*, *The Backstreet Bugle* and *Dark Star*. It will look in detail at the Northampton Arts Lab and the underground press as counter-institutions, and spaces in which Moore developed a highly politicised aesthetic and creative strategies which he would carry into his later professional work. These strategies included a commitment to the realisation of non-hierarchical, non-alienated and collaborative artistic production, a partisan engagement with key political issues and social movements, an insistence on formal experimentation (including the development of a canny self-reflexivity) and an emphasis on a demystified, participatory and enabling relationship with the reader. This will be demonstrated through a detailed analysis of the strips themselves, as well as the contexts in which they were produced, published, distributed and received. Moore's work will also be related to the wider underground comix scene in Europe and North America, not only in terms of visual and narrative influence, but in a way that establishes the crucial significance of comics to the counterculture as a whole, a factor often overlooked in historical reviews of the

period. Moore's own experience of the counterculture also contests several historical readings which insist on a definitive split between its political and cultural wings during this period, constituting as it did the foundation of an anarchist creative practice.

Biography:

Maggie Gray has just submitted a PhD in the History of Art at University College London (UCL), entitled '*Love Your Rage, Not Your Cage*' *Comics as Cultural Resistance: Alan Moore 1971-1989*. Her thesis addresses Moore's early work as a case study to consider the potential for the creation of adversarial mass culture in the context of the rise of Thatcherism and New Right hegemony. This is situated in relation to critical theory and cultural studies, as the dominant poles that have framed theoretical debate around mass/popular culture.

Maggie has taught comics, aesthetics, and the history of art and design at Middlesex University, St Martins College of Art and Design and UCL. She has previously completed an MA in the History of Art at UCL, with a dissertation on U.S. superhero comics in the early Cold War, and a BA in the History of Art and English & Related Literature at the University of York, with a dissertation on the adult revolution and emergence of the 'graphic novel', in relation to Neil Gaiman et al's *The Sandman*.

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Laura Hilton

Reincarnating Mina Murray: Subverting the Gothic Heroine?

The character of Mina Harker née Murray has played a recurring role in a variety of media, including prose, television, film and comics. This paper will focus on how Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill interpret Bram Stoker's Mina in their comics series, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (1999-present), and how Mina is reinterpreted in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, or *LXG* (2003, dir. Stephen Norrington). An analysis of these incarnations of Mina will assess the extent to which each characterisation is conventional or subversive in terms of Mina's role as a Gothic heroine.

In Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Mina can be read as presenting a dual identity, split between a conservative Victorian woman and a controversial 'New Woman.' Indeed, despite her reserved demeanour and desire to embody a dutiful, submissive wife, hints of the New Woman are presented through Mina's independence, intelligence and journalistic skills. In the ongoing *League* series, Mina's progression towards the New Woman continues: Mina is divorced and the *League*'s leader, despite her gender and her lack of superhuman abilities. Mina's leadership is doubly unusual given the Victorian setting and the comics form,

both of which are more likely to feature male rather than female leaders. In *LXG*, however, Mina is relegated, marginalised, and no longer a leader. Despite her presentation as a powerful vampire, she plays a relatively minor role in the frequent action sequences. Furthermore, whilst Mina is often presented as desirable and sexualised, she is impelled to excuse herself after drinking blood under the shocked gaze of her male companions and her vampiric attacks lead Quatermain to liken her to an animal.

The film adaptation, therefore, erases many of the progressive elements of Mina's characterisation as presented by Stoker, Moore and O'Neill. My paper will explore how this relates to discourse surrounding the Gothic heroine.

Biography:

Laura Hilton is a final-year Ph.D. candidate at the University of Birmingham, where she also completed her B.A. and M.A. Her doctoral research questions representations, interpretations and subversions of the Gothic in the contemporary graphic novel. Laura has articles forthcoming in *Gothic Science Fiction: Critical Essays on Post-1980s SF*, *Investigating Heroes: Truth, Justice and Quality TV*, *Comment Rêver la Science-fiction à Present?* and *Alan Moore and the Gothic Tradition*. She is founder and co-Editor of *The Birmingham Journal of Literature and Language* and her wider research interests include the graphic novel, science fiction and fantasy, and popular culture.

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Stephen Keane

Watching The Watchmen: From Panels to Frames in Watchmen (1986-2009)

Comic Book / Graphic Novel / Superhero (delete as inappropriate) movies have become a regular feature of Hollywood Cinema in the past decade or so. Most superhero movies – X-Men, Spider-Man etc – merely turn iconic comic book sources into blockbuster movie series. My main interest lies with the ways in which particular film adaptations have at least tried to incorporate relevant narrative and visual elements from specific graphic novel sources. *Road to Perdition* (2002) and *Sin City* (2005) provide for a solid start in this respect, from 'stillness' to 'graphic sensibility'. *From Hell* (2001), *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003) and *V for Vendetta* (2005) are obviously disputed when it comes to Alan Moore's writing but why was *Watchmen* (2009) quite favoured by artist Dave Gibbons and completely disavowed by Moore? Zack Snyder's adaptation can be judged in all sorts of ways: the 'unfilmable' novel passed through numerous directors; and specific elements of story, casting, design and costume, ending up somewhere between too faithful or completely heretical? In this paper I will draw upon comparisons and contrasts between 'graphic novel as movie' and 'movie as graphic novel', specifically focussing on: Chapter One / Opening Sequence. Too faithful or not enough?

Biography:

Stephen Keane is Senior Lecturer in Film and Television Studies at The University of Northampton. He is author of: *Disaster Movies: The Cinema of Catastrophe* (Wallflower: London and New York, 2006); *CineTech: Film, Convergence and New Media* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills and New York, 2007) and *100 Comic Book Movies* (London: BFI, forthcoming).

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Geoff Klock

V for Villain

Geoff Klock will explore the radical moral ambiguity of V in Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta*. V is an anarchist who destabilizes fascist near-future England, but Moore, respecting the anarchy that V stands for, refuses to make him a clearly heroic figure, forcing the reader to evaluate him with little guidance. In fact, Moore goes a long way toward supporting a reading that makes V a villain, to balance out the fact that his structural position – the main character taking down a fascist organization and looking cool doing it – makes him easy to view as heroic. V wears a full face mask with a frozen grin on it that contrasts ironically with the grim violence he dispenses, not unlike The Joker. He is a revenge killer who kidnaps and psychologically tortures a young innocent girl in order to brainwash her into becoming like him, as any good cult leader would do. He kills people who are clearly unable to defend themselves, and though most have done terrible things, many are only marginally connected and repentant. In the course of my presentation I will explore the 2005 film and how in England the release was pushed back because of a summer terrorist bus bombing in London, and the legacy of V in such "hero" villains as Rorschach and Ozymandias in Moore's own *Watchmen* to Mark Millar's *The Authority*, *Ultimates*, and *Ultimate X-Men* and Frank Miller's *Batman*. Just as V disrupts fascist England by taking apart what makes it work, Moore's Character disrupts the reader's assumptions about the way comic book main characters work. And he does it playing with a genre that is very much about identifying with "heroes" who operate outside the law and who punch people until they get what they want.

Biography:

Geoff Klock is the author of *How to Read Superhero Comics and Why* and *Imaginary Biographies: Misreading the Lives of Poets* and has a doctorate from Oxford University. He is an assistant professor at Borough of Manhattan Community College, where he teaches composition and British Literature. He recently participated in a conference at the Metropolitan Museum of Art surrounding their exhibit *Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy*. He has delivered more than 20 conference presentations.

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Deneb Kozikoski Valereto

Philosophy in the Fairground: *The Killing Joke* and Thought on Madness

The increasing popularity of Alan Moore's *The Killing Joke* is frequently explained by the revelation of the Joker's tragic past and by his plot to drive Commissioner Gordon mad. The revelation of the Joker's personal history and his pivotal role in this episode of the Batman saga set the scene for a debate between reason and madness, which may be read as a performance of, and critical reflection on, contemporary philosophical thought on madness. The aim of this paper is to analyze how *TKJ* comments on the theory of Michel Foucault (*History of Madness*, "The Order of Discourse") and Jacques Derrida's subsequent response in his article "Cogito and the History of Madness", published in *Writing and Difference*. Foucault's 'archaeology of silence' attempts to write the history of the mad and to show how institutions such as the psychiatric clinic have controlled madmen. Derrida's response claims that the archaeology of the history of the mad is itself a rational project that does not speak madness, but reason. The Joker's incarceration in Arkham asylum and his praise of madness are instances in which Foucault's and Derrida's debate are creatively performed within the comic book. The questions that set this analysis in motion are: what light can *TKJ*, as a literary work, shed on the philosophical debate concerning the 'unspeakability' of madness between Foucault and Derrida? Is literature as a discourse privileged over philosophical argument when it comes to 'speaking madness'? And if so, what is it that determines this superior suitability? To answer these questions I start from a critical assessment of Foucault's and Derrida's thought on madness. Secondly, I move to a thematic and formal analysis focusing on critical moments within *TKJ*. I conclude with a reflection on the Joker's exceptional case of madness.

Biography:

Deneb Kozikoski Valereto was born in Brazil. She received her B.A in Humanities with a major in literature and minor in philosophy at the University College Maastricht, the Netherlands. Her fields of interest include literary theory, 20th century philosophy and the comic book as an emerging literary genre. She is currently pursuing a Research Master in Literature at Leiden University.

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K A Laity

Rite Here: Ritual, Performance and the Magick of Place

From his first public working, *The Birth Caul*, Alan Moore has always had a strong attachment to location as a specific aspect of his magickal work. The performance was originally intended as a "unique event" which sought "to draw

the audience along the spiral of a winding, umbilical text, into successive pre-pubertal, pre-verbal and finally pre-natal states of being" in the specific location of Newcastle's nineteenth century Old County Court. Similarly, Moore unpacked the layers of geography of his home city of Northampton in the pages of *Voice of the Fire*, while the London locations of *The Highbury Working* and *Angel Passage*, his conjuration of William Blake, provided an anchor for those performances which tied the ethereal to a geographic reality. What happens when the ritual becomes unmoored from the place of its birth, when the "one time" performance repeats across the world, distributed on CDs and comics? Does ritual transform into mere performance, or can the intent survive the commercial process? If so, what does the ritual without location or the original conjurer produce?

Biography:

K. A. Laity is Assistant Professor of English at the College of Saint Rose where she teaches medieval literature and culture, film, popular culture and New Media. Her writings include both academic and popular essays on literature, film, comics and social media as well as fiction, humour and plays. She has written on and reviewed the work of Alan Moore, most recently delivering the paper "Avast Land Lubbers!: Reading Lost Girls as Post-Sadeian Text" at Angela Carter: A Critical Exploration, University of Northampton, June 2009.

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Gary Lloyd

Moore and Music

In this paper I will talk about what led to my working on 'Brought To Light', the stage version, the recorded performance piece with Alan, and the live performance Alan and I gave. The tale begins with a postcard and leads to a series of mostly-but-not-really-entirely-coincidental meetings with Iain Banks, Neil Gaiman, Dave McKean, Bryan Talbot, Clive Barker, Eric Jarvis, Kathy Acker, Tim Roth and Alan Moore - but it mostly adds up to the fact of my going to the office, going to work as a composer of applied music, and meeting some of the other people who were already at their desks.

I will also talk about getting to know Alan and talking mathematics with him at some length - I was his maths advisor on Big Numbers and indeed was in contact with Dr Benoit Mandelbrot in connection to this (I'm a graduate mathematician by the way); I also was a skateboarding advisor on the same series and therein lies an even more amusing tale. I can also reveal Alan's huge chart for Big Numbers - a copy of which I proudly own (a gift from Alan).

Not long after Alan and I met he went through the breakdown of his marriage, terrible financial problems, and found that many of his friends were deserting him for essentially not providing a vicarious thrill. I think this period of time was a second and far more crucial crucible in Alan's development than his early

career had been and I will attempt to explain why.

In connection to the recorded version of BTL I will outline how we went about it musically and in terms of Alan's performance - there were in fact four versions that I developed before settling on the best format, each version was important in development of the eventual style and technique of the final composition and importantly each version treated the dialogue performance with a different technique. There are some very amusing and illuminating stories about the recording sessions, and about the showcase performance of BTL we did together.

Finally I will address why I turned down the invitation to participate in the last Moon and Serpent project 'Angel Passage', as well as talking about the future - how Alan is taking part in my project with Iain Banks (The Choir Of Alan Moores), and the possibility of another narrative/music project.

Biography:

For about twenty years Gary Lloyd has worked mainly as a composer, writing music for film, tv drama and documentary, theatre, contemporary dance, son et lumiere, art installations, orchestral concert performances... He also works as a producer, mixer and remixer.

Two of his collaborative hybrid narrative/music performance pieces have been released on CD - 'THE BRIDGE' with the highly acclaimed author IAIN BANKS, and 'BROUGHT TO LIGHT' with comic book genius ALAN MOORE. He's planning a third narrative/music piece based on the work of revolutionary psychiatrist R.D. LAING.

His first noteworthy commission came in 1988 scoring the soundtrack for the stage version of NEIL GAIMAN and DAVE McKEAN's 'VIOLENT CASES'. He's written music for over five hundred productions since then, including: the music for contemporary dancepiece 'TRACK' by the PAULA HAMPSON DANCE GROUP in 1997; the theatrical score for the 4TH WALL productions of JEAN-PAUL SARTRE's 'HUIS CLOS' ('NO WAY OUT') in 2001 and 'ROAD TO NIRVANA' in 2006; the soundtracks for the 'TSHUKUDU' South African wildlife documentary series directed by MARIANNE WILDING between 1999 and 2005; and music for the contemporary dancepiece 'NOCTURNE' by the MARC BREW COMPANY in 2009.

Currently he's working again with Iain Banks on an album of songs featuring a cast of guest singers and performers in tribute to the fictional band FROZEN GOLD from Iain's novel 'ESPEDAIR STREET' - a tribute to a band that never existed. He's also completing production on several album projects by other artists, is co-developing a large outdoor pyrotechnic/dance performance piece for 2010 and 2011, and is co-developing a series of educational shorts for the BBC.

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Mervi Miettinen

Past as Multiple Choice? – Textual Anarchy in The Killing Joke

Mervi's paper will focus on the 1988 graphic novel *The Killing Joke*, written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Brian Bolland, exploring the origins of Batman's arch-enemy, The Joker. Approaching the past as being one of "multiple choice", the graphic novel stands "separate and unresolved at key moments, exposing the cracks in the sanity of organization" (Klock, 2006, 59). The ambiguity of past as "multiple choice" is not restricted to the history of the character, but can also be traced to the visual design" in *The Killing Joke*, artist Brian Bolland often copies the style of previous artists from the 1940s and 1950s in a kind of pastiche, inserting other artists' styles in photographs as well as in the general visual style of the comic.

The paper proposes to examine the disorganizations that characterize The Joker's past in Moore's version of his origins, which could be read as a kind of textual anarchy, a refusal to obey the traditional meanings and linear histories. Past as multiple choice is ambiguous, open to new interpretations, new readings of the same character, endlessly open-ended. Considering the problems of continuity that plague the superhero genre as a whole, the past as multiple choice is often a necessity rather than a choice.

Biography:

Mervi Miettinen is a doctoral student at the University of Tampere in Finland. Her dissertation focuses on the evolution of superhero politics and ideology, especially in the works of Alan Moore. She is currently working on her thesis as a visiting Fulbright Scholar at Bowling Green State University. In her spare time she still enjoys reading comics.

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Chris Murray

The Eroticism of Place: Alan Moore and Psychogeography

Through much of his work Moore explores certain inter-related topics, including the experience of place, the movement of consciousness through time, and the possibilities of an extended or altered awareness which transcends the usual limitations of human perception. This is tied very closely to his notion of magic, but for the purposes of this paper I propose to discuss this in terms of psychogeography.

There are several psychogeographical strategies described by the Situationists, including Dérive (drift), the sense of actually being in and passing through a space, wandering without preconceptions of how that space is supposed to be used. Another aspect of early psychogeography is the sexualisation of the environment, the eroticism of exploration and envelopment. In this sense psychogeography posits that capitalism and the oppressive forces of traditional architecture, etc are sexually oppressive, using the environment to channel and control erotic impulses and sexual behaviour. Such concerns are explored by Moore in works such as *Big Numbers*, *A Small Killing*, and *From Hell*, among others. The paper will also trace Moore influences in terms of his thinking about the relations between consciousness, place and sexuality, including Peter Ackroyd, Iain Sinclair, Arthur Machen, and William Blake, who are now seen by some as negotiating similar territory.

The paper will argue that Moore draws much from his influences, but that by working in the comics medium his ability to map these connections is all the more acute, and the medium itself, as used by Moore and his artistic collaborators, distorts the relationship between place and the act of its representation. The worlds created in his comics are membranes, psychic maps, overlaid on our sense of the world, and of place, distorting, manipulating and liberating our sense of the world and our place within it.

Biography:

Dr Chris Murray lectures in English and Film Studies at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He has also taught at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design and is a central member of the Scottish Word and Image Group (SWIG), which organises annual conferences on aspects of word and image study. He researches on comics, in particular British comics writers such as Alan Moore, Grant Morrison and Neil Gaiman and organises the Annual Dundee Comics Conference as part of the Dundee Literary Festival. He is the author of *Champions of the Oppressed: Superhero Comics, Popular Culture and Propaganda in American During World War Two* (Hampton Press, 2010), and numerous chapters in books such as *Comics And Culture* (Museum of Tusculaneum/University of Copenhagen Press, 2000), and *Contemporary American Comics in Context* (Mississippi University Press, 2010), entries on comics in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Cultural Theory*, and *The Greenwood Encyclopaedia of Comics and Graphic Novels*, and articles in *The Scottish Society of Art History Journal* (2006), as well as several papers in *The International Journal of Comic Art*. He is editor, along with Dr Julia Round, of the journal *Studies in Comics* (Intellect Publishing).

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Peter Paik

Radicalism and Realpolitik: Political Realism in the Comics of Alan Moore

One of the most striking aspects of Alan Moore's works is their startling depictions of the cruel and ruthless actions of states and individuals on the world historical stage. More than most literary artists, Moore has a finely attuned sense of the workings and consequences of realpolitik: the Martian invasion in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* is thwarted by means of a biological weapon that takes the lives of numerous Londoners trapped in the southern half of the city, a fascist party comes to power amid the pleas for order from a population traumatized by mass death from nuclear fallout in *V for Vendetta*, the superheroes decide to rule the world directly in *Miracleman*: Olympus and establish a regime immune to dissent, and in the most famous example of all, the former masked adventurer Adrian Veidt averts nuclear war by teleporting a monstrous life form into Manhattan where it explodes and takes the lives of half the city. In all these narratives, Moore depicts with probing insight and unflinching veracity the radical and irreversible acts that either preserve a social order or dissolve it. His comics accordingly are eminently productive in mapping out the path to and repercussions of sweeping, transformative action. Indeed, much of the force contained in his depictions of realpolitik arises from the helpless and ambivalent position of the bystanders, often the narrative's protagonists, who witness these actions. They experience at once the crushing burden of the exigency that makes such drastic actions necessary, the shocked relief at the fact of having been saved at the last minute, and the shaming sting of the injustice at the innocent lives wiped out by the means of deliverance. In short, Moore recreates with a vivid forcefulness the experience of fateful decisions undertaken in times of grave danger. His comics, more than most works of political theory today, fulfill the criteria of realism as set forth by philosopher John Gray: "a discipline of thought that may be too austere for a culture that prizes psychological comfort above anything else, and it is reasonable question whether western liberal societies are capable of the moral effort that is involved in setting aside hopes of world-transformation" (from *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*).

Biography:

Peter Y. Paik is Associate Professor in Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he has been teaching since 2000. His book, *From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Catastrophe*, came out this year from the University of Minnesota Press. He is co-editor, with Marcus Bullock, of *Aftermaths: Exile, Migration, and Diaspora Reconsidered* from Rutgers University Press. His articles have appeared in *Theory and Event*, *Postmodern Culture*, the *Yale Broch Symposium*, and *Religion and the Arts*. His current project examines the idea of world-making in the work of British novelist J. G. Ballard, American comics writer Bill Willingham, and Korean filmmaker Park Chan-Wook.

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Marco Pellitteri

From Daddy Warbucks to the Watchmen: General Annotations on Alan Moore, superheroes, and ideology in popular comics

Serial adventure comics, both in general and through the specific genre of superheroes, have always been mostly based on conservatist ideologies. Alan Moore has been, with his masterwork *Watchmen* and other stories (*Marvel Man*, 1963, *Tom Strong*, etc.), the most important author among those who have implicitly, or overtly, underlined and criticized the controversial values and ideologies which lie behind the very founding concept in the fiction genre of superheroes and vigilantes.

This paper proposes—as a general, theoretical introduction—some short considerations on the ideology in mass media, beginning from the reflections by Marx, Gramsci, the Frankfurt thinkers, Eco, Habermas, Thompson, De Certeau. Superhero comics (with a specific attention upon Moore's *Watchmen* and some American influential comic book series, such as *The Authority*), by underlining the bourgeois ideological base of the action accomplished by the masked/caped vigilantes, have let many narrative and cultural limits appear into sight. This contribution, through the presentation of some implicit narrative categories and issues emerging from Alan Moore's superhero comics, finds parallels and contradictions between the so-called «supermen» in the serial narratives and the Nietzschean *Übermensch* overtly, or subtly, cited and criticized by the Northampton's writer in many of his works; and, after Barthes, the paper underlines the anti-historical power of the popular myths.

The paper, finally, re-reads the meanings of the superhero comic books as «allegories» of certain ideological tendencies in the UK (as pointed out by Moore himself in his criticisms of British politics, since *V for Vendetta*) and the philosophy of history of the USA—as perceived in Europe, from Tocqueville on—according to a teleological interpretation. Superheroes (specifically, Moore's superheroes), hence, become like a litmus of ideological tendencies in the mainstream society.

Biography:

Marco Pellitteri is a sociologist. He worked for the CERI (at «Sciences-Po», Paris), University of Trento, IARD Institute and AESVI (Milan), ISICULT Institute (Rome). Author of several books and essays on comics, animation, mass media and youth, Japanese popular culture. In 2009 his Ph.D. thesis won the «John A. Lent Scholarship in Comics Studies» and his book *Il Drago e la Saetta. Modelli, strategie e identità dell'immaginario giapponese* ('The Dragon and the Dazzle: Models, Strategies, and Identities of Japanese Imagination', 2008) won two grants of the Japan Foundation for the translation into English and publication worldwide.

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Andrés Romero-Jódar

Alan Moore's Graphic Novels: A Hammer to Shape Reality

Alan Moore has proved to be one of the most important comic-book and graphic-novel writers of all times. Works like *V for Vendetta*, *Watchmen*, *From Hell*, *Lost Girls* or his novel take on *The Swamp Thing* saga have pushed the boundaries of the genres into the ethos of Postmodernity, and have marked essential standpoints in the development of narrative-iconical texts. The aim of this paper is to analyse Alan Moore's narratives as products of a characteristically Postmodernist conscious rejection of grand narratives and globalising discourses for the definition of reality. In this respect, his works can be placed in the context of Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson's denunciation of the suffocating nature of grand narratives. At the same time, Alan Moore's conscious attempts to destroy any form of globalising definition of the self strongly bring to mind the efforts of the early twentieth-century avant-gardes to provoke their bourgeois audiences into action by fostering their radical distaste. Artists such as Bertolt Brecht, Vladimir Mayakovsky or Luis Buñuel, to name but a few, emphasised the importance of an art committed to a revolutionary cause. As Brecht famously argued, "art is not a mirror to reflect the world, but a hammer with which to shape it." In a similar vein, Alan Moore's fictions do not present a single character involved in a personal quest. Rather, they fictionalise communal worlds where single individuals suffer the imposition of various sorts of globalising discourses. Thus, *V for Vendetta* presents a group of characters oppressed by the dystopian society of an Orwellian Britain; *Watchmen* offers a complex reality that is utterly destroyed by the imposition of one discourse over the rest; while *From Hell* unveils and explores the double standard of morality suffocating Victorian England which will eventually produce its own monster in Jack the Ripper.

The paper argues that the radical positioning of Alan Moore's creations is an effect of his socially committed writing. This perspective would allow us to consider *Lost Girls*, his pornographic masterpiece, as an act of intellectual terrorism aimed not only at the hypocritical consideration of sexuality at the beginning of the twentieth century, but also at our own contemporary society with its similarly biased appreciation of sexuality and freedom.

Biography:

Andrés Romero-Jódar holds a BA and an MA in English Philology, and a BA in Spanish Philology from the University of Zaragoza (Spain). He is a Research Fellow (FPI) at the Department of English and German Philology of the University of Zaragoza, and forms part of an excellence research group entitled "Contemporary Narrative in English." He is currently working on his Doctoral Thesis on sequential art, iconic genres and graphic novels in English, and has published on these and related subjects in academic journals such as *Atlantis*, *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense*, *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*, *Revista de Literatura* and *Tropelías*.

Vasileios Sakkos

Dissecting Comic Book Skin: Cuts in Alan Moore's *The Birth Caul* and *From Hell*

The subject of this paper would be to analyze skin as a metaphor for identity and a vehicle for political connotations in Alan Moore's *The Birth Caul* and *From Hell*. In the former, the comic book frame will be viewed as a container for artistic tendencies and also a personality-defining boundary between the formulating inner psyche and an ever shifting fluid reality. In the latter, Eddie Campbell's brush strokes, wielded by Moore, dissect aspects of Victorian society in an extraordinarily severe way matched only by Joe Coleman's *surface surgery* panels. The suffocating hymen of the Birth Caul initiates the branding of the individual, which perpetuates itself in the scarring confines of a hellishly restrictive society. Skin is libidinized, tarnished and deified in the pages of Moore's work.

The aforementioned works will be placed under a Freudian spotlight, with traces of Klein's and Didier Anzieu's notions of "skin identity" and "skin ego" within the boundaries provided by Lyotard's "post-modern condition", in order to portray the ways in which skin can be used as a metaphor for the dissection of human nature.

A link between the underground comix movement and Moore's work will be one of the tools used to flesh out a specific recurring narrative in comic books. By focusing on their work we discern how artists like Moore and Campbell, sensually eviscerate aspects of everyday life via creative outbursts. Their storytelling and drawing techniques, comparable to an anatomist's artistic tendencies, will be touched upon and layers of skin will be traversed as they unravel in pages.

The Body is eroticized, deformed and reformed in graphic panels and parts of the subconscious are spilled in storytelling gutters: one aspect of the comic book medium, slashing through life.

Biography:

Vasileios Sakkos is a PhD student at the London Consortium (Birkbeck, Tate Gallery, Institute of Contemporary Arts). His research focuses on the representation of skin as a concept defining identity within the comic book medium. He is also part of a team (Comicdom.gr) whose aim is to promote the comic book medium culturally in Greece. For the past four years we have been organizing a conference in Athens, Greece focusing on comic book art.

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Jasmine Shadrack

V Versus Hollywood: A Discourse on Polemic Thievery

Given that textual narrative can be infinite and the filmic framework finite, a space is created between the source material and it's possible reappropriation, where a choice is made. Do the Film Executives decide to be true to the original (where the creators true meaning rests) or do they bow to fiscal policy and socio-political risk free cinema?

To introduce this paper, a brief and general overview of the adaptation process will be examined, wherein the survival of the narrative line and the filmic selection process will be explored. This will subsequently lead us to consider the vault from the original graphic novel of *V for Vendetta* to the Hollywood representation.

The next section will deal with the areas that worked in the filmic adaptation and the areas that did not. What has been lost? What has been gained? What has been reappropriated? What ideologies have been subverted or even ignored? The rearrangement of the source material to fit into a differing socio-political framework perhaps provides a diluted, potentially inconsistent collage of material that could mean the power it once contained is, if not lost, then a shadow of its former self. It's essence watered down, it's spirit and provocative weight potentially denied by simply fitting a square (and revolutionary) peg into a round cinematic hole.

Lastly, this paper will examine the diasporic, cultural and geographic considerations of V as his true self; that of a London revolutionary *not* superhero. The concept of the superhero as being inherently American in its ideology clashes with that of the original V, a British anarchist with his historic namesake and his associated personal history at the root of his characterization and much of the original narrative's framework.

This central tenet seems to expand in the chasm created by the shift from graphic novel to Hollywood. The diasporic, cultural and geographic shift from Britain (observed and created through British eyes) to the narrative being poured through a powerful, Americanized lens, destabilises the original political dichotomy (Fascism set against Anarchism, not American neo-conservatism versus American liberalism)) and geographical, political and historic relevance. The graphic novel's London setting, original narrative and history could be potentially sold back to British audiences, as viewed and reappropriated vicariously through another country's diasporic, cultural and geographic lens.

In conclusion, this paper posits a celebration of the beauty, visceral power and freedom of the graphic novel set against the power and homogeneity of Hollywood. Graphic novels do not exist as Hollywood's current goldmine, but in fact to exist as narrative and visual freedom, in and of itself. The audience or subject position of experiencing the "watered down" version of literature, from all its various forms and sources, creates a spoon-fed *Hollywoodized* culture that

somehow manages to sugar-coat political vibrancy and vitality and reduce it to mere entertainment.

Biography:

Jasmine Shadrack has studied at the University of Northampton for her undergraduate and post graduate degrees. She is currently finishing her PGCE at the University of Bedfordshire (formerly De Montfort) and is planning her PhD for an October start. She considers herself a gregarious recluse, a dalmatian fancier and a lover of all things odd. She might be 33.

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David Simmons

“Nothing too heavy or too light” Negotiating Moore’s *Tom Strong* and the academic establishment

The proposed paper examines Alan Moore’s America’s Best Comics’ *Tom Strong* series. In particular, the paper will utilise Pierre Bourdieu’s theories concerning cultural capital, and will suggest reasons why the aforementioned series has still largely been ignored by a scholarly community increasingly interested in introducing the comic book and graphic novel forms into the academic establishment. While Alan Moore’s works have often been at the forefront of this nascent appreciation, with older texts such as *V for Vendetta* (1982 - 1989), *Watchmen* (1986 – 1987), and *From Hell* (1991 – 1996) and newer ventures such as *Lost Girls* (1991 – 2006) increasingly discussed in academic circles; at conferences and in the emergent field of comic books studies, as yet *Tom Strong* seems to lie outside of this groundswell. This paper will argue that this can be perceived as a result of a conscious attempt to subjectively elide those works by Moore that are difficult to fit into accepted critical hegemonies. It is significant that *Tom Strong* draws on a range of pulp sources (most notably early twentieth-century American Pulp fiction of the sort printed in *Weird Tales* and *Astounding Science Fiction*) that are themselves yet to be accepted in the manner that many of the more ‘establishment friendly’ Victorian texts referenced in the original *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (1999 -) have been. The absence of any recognisable academic cultural capital means that to date *Tom Strong* has fallen outside of academic interest in a move that has interesting connotations for how scholars examine and begin to canonise the comic book form.

Biography:

David Simmons is currently employed as a lecturer in American Literature, Film and Television Studies at the University of Northampton. He has published extensively in the areas of American Literature and Media, including a monograph entitled *The Anti-Hero in the American Novel: From Heller to Vonnegut* (Palgrave, 2008) and an edited collection: *New Critical Essays on Kurt*

Vonnegut (Palgrave, 2009). David is currently co-editing (with Nicola Allen) a collection of essays that are concerned with re-evaluating the contemporary novel entitled *Reassessing the Contemporary Canon: From Joseph Conrad to Zadie Smith* for publication in 2010.

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Marc Singer

Dark Genesis: Falls from Language and Returns to Eden in the Comics of Alan Moore

From his comics to his performances and novels, Alan Moore has always been fascinated with language, as both a distinctive element of his style and as a subject in its own right. While this paper will outline Moore's evolving interest in language, it focuses on how one early comics story returns its characters to their generic, cultural, and linguistic origins to argue that pictorial narratives—comics—can communicate meaning more clearly than spoken language.

"Pog," published in a 1984 issue of *Swamp Thing*, is an homage to Walt Kelly's newspaper strip *Pogo*, with Kelly's loquacious swamp animals recast as alien wanderers searching for a new home. The story is told from the aliens' point of view, returning the Swamp Thing to his original role as the speechless, unintelligible monster of the 1972 short story that introduced him to comics readers. Stripping the Swamp Thing of language, Moore forces his protagonist to devise nonverbal, pictorial methods of communication. Meanwhile, the aliens' account of their own history recalls the origin of the world as told in the book of Genesis; their paradise of peaceful animal coexistence is disrupted by humans who introduce the problem of evil, and they depart in an ark filled with selected representatives of each species, seeking a new planet to repopulate.

This Biblical intertext speaks directly to the issue's linguistic preoccupations: writers from the Midrashic rabbis to Umberto Eco and Paul Auster have interpreted the fall from Eden as the fall from a perfect language of direct correspondence between word and thing into a flawed one of arbitrary signifiers and missed messages. "Pog," and Alan Moore's comics work more generally, proposes that comics have the potential to counteract this linguistic fall through their recourse to visual as well as verbal narratives. Moore's comics have always been ready to exploit the tension between their visual and verbal components; "Pog" suggests just how productive and important that tension can be.

Biography:

Marc Singer is Assistant Professor of English at Howard University in Washington, DC. His articles on contemporary literature, comics, and popular culture have appeared in *Post Script*, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *JNT: Journal of Narrative Theory*, *Twentieth-Century Literature*, *African American Review*, and the *International Journal of Comic Art*. He is the co-editor, with Nels

Pearson, of *Detective Fiction in a Postcolonial and Transnational World* and a former Chair of the International Comic Arts Forum.

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Mike Starr

Biography:

Mike Starr is a Postgraduate researcher at the University of Northampton, specialising in science-fiction and post-structuralist philosophy, particularly the work of Gilles Deleuze. His PhD thesis explores the work of H G Wells in light of post-structuralist theory. He has presented conference papers on mortality and *Battlestar Galactica*, identity formation in Joss Whedon's *Dollhouse* and he also lectures part-time in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory.

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Antonio Venezia

"A Sense of History's Patterns...": Mapping Northampton in *Voice of the Fire* and *Big Numbers*

It's a funny little town [...] It's just because it's right in the middle of the country; it's like everything seemed to happen there or everybody seemed to pass through there on their way to whatever destiny awaited them. It has a certain character of its own as a result. [Alan Moore]

Alan Moore's association with Northampton is well established. The town and its surrounding areas are an important locus for his life and work, which makes it altogether surprising that this link is comparatively underexplored in the growing body of critical work on Moore. This paper will seek to remedy this situation by reading the figurations of history and space in the prose novel *Voice of the Fire* (1996) and the frustratingly incomplete comic collaboration with Bill Sienkiewicz, *Big Numbers* (1990). An important critical and analytical term of use here is that of *chorography*: the gathering and archiving of historical, cultural and material details within a specific geographical locale. These texts can be considered chorographic in their framing and re-framing of the history and space of Northampton, acting as localised archaeologies of occluded phenomena. *Voice of the Fire* articulates a patterning of Northampton history across millenia, each chapter opening out onto succesively larger frames. *Big Numbers*, influenced by fractal geometry, adopts a multiperspectival structure to track the effect of macro economics on local social levels. These narratives connect to larger networks of the national and the global, the contemporary and the ancient, from the Neolithic to Thatcherite property development. Focusing

on Northampton seems particularly topical and appropriate as Moore's long anticipated second novel, *Jerusalem*, is also to be set in the town. Both *Voice of the Fire* and *Big Numbers* can be said to represent and perform spatio-temporal mappings of Northampton, and by reading them together this paper will attempt to tease out the historical and cultural resonances that these texts contain.

Biography:

Tony Venezia is a Ph.D student at Birkbeck, University of London researching a thesis on the representations of history in the work of Alan Moore. His background is in modern and contemporary literatures, with a particular interest in literary and cultural historiographies. He has published on Alan Moore in the *International Journal of Comic Art* and elsewhere, and is contributing a chapter on *The Bojeffries Saga* to the forthcoming *Alan Moore and the Gothic Tradition* anthology.

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Nathan Wiseman-Trowse

Biography:

Nathan Wiseman-Trowse is Senior Lecturer in Popular Culture at the University of Northampton. He has taught at the University for twelve years over a range of media related courses and is currently Course Leader for the University's BA Popular Music degree. Nathan's research has covered the multiple Blade Runner narratives, discourses of identity in British indie music, the guitar solo and symbolic disruption and shamanism in the music of Julian Cope. His doctoral thesis, *Performing Class in British Popular Music* was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2008. He has subsequently published 'Oedipus Wrecks: Nick Cave and the Presley Myth' in *Cultural Seeds* (Ashgate, 2009) and 'Marvel or Miracle: (Re)placing the Original in Alan Moore's Marvelman' in the journal *Critical Engagements* (2010). He is currently writing a second article on Nick Cave, 'The Singer and the Song: Nick Cave and the Archetypal Function of the Cover Version' for *The Art of Nick Cave* (Intellect, 2011) and a monograph for Reaktion books, *Nick Drake: Dreaming England* (2012). Nathan is a member of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music.

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Aine Young

From Hell: The Adverse Journey from Page to Screen

Alan Moore and the Hughes brothers shared a common goal to depict nineteenth century English slum life in a credible manner in their versions of *From Hell*. The documentary style created by Moore and Eddie Campbell in their graphic novel is

not replicated in the film with correspondent solutions specific to cinema. Instead, the Hughes brothers veered away from the source text thematically and aesthetically, creating something quite different. These choices, although inventive, ultimately alienated fans and were a factor in the film's disastrous critical reception.

Pascal Lefevre posits in his essay "Incompatible Visual Ontologies?" that the unique conflicts facing a filmmaking team that choose to adapt a comic book can be broken down into four main divisions: "first, to what extent the screenwriter has to rewrite the story, second, how to go from page layout to a single, unchangeable screen frame, third, how to translate the static drawings into moving and photographic images, and fourth, how to give the "silent world" an audible sound?". These distinctions will frame my theoretical, thematic and aesthetic analysis of Alan Moore's graphic novel "From Hell" to the resultant film of the same name.

For academics and screenwriters alike, the process of adaptation is a fascinating one; why do the filmmakers and key creatives make the choices they do? By focusing on the creative and commercial process of From Hell's adaptation, and drawing on personally-conducted in-depth interviews with screenwriter Rafael Yglesias, this paper sheds light on this particular adaptation's methodology and investigates how the film From Hell has arguably failed to produce either a totally faithful or an individually original version of the original graphic novel.

Biography:

Aine Young is a second year Film Studies PhD candidate enrolled at Queen's University, Belfast. Her area of research is comic book to film adaptation. Adaptation studies are primarily contextualized by literary adaptations which focus on the transformation of words into pictures (visual conception versus visual perception). Comic book adaptations offer distinct creative dilemmas that are dissimilar to literary taxonomical study. By way of creative practice and critical analysis, her thesis will investigate what changes when an adaptation occurs from a drawn sequential narrative to a live action cinematic reimagining that employs new sets of aesthetic and functional codes, narrative strategies and reception modes.
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